MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • SEPTEMBER 2001

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Many Exhibits Planned

In mid-July we mounted an exhibit at the Museum entitled **"Delivery Days."** Those were the days when almost everything was delivered to your doorstep: milk, ice, laundry, mail, and flowers to name a few. Today, only mail and flowers continue to be delivered to us. We have old photographs of these activities, plus artifacts from local dairies, laundries, ice companies, and samples of old-fashioned letters. The highlight of our exhibit is a collection of scale **models of 1920s delivery trucks** created by **Ray Helber**, son of the last co-owner of the **West Side Dairy.** The exhibit will be **open until mid-October** so come on down! We are open **Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from noon-4** and **by appointment**. Admission is free but we appreciate donations to our Wishbowl. Thanks go to **Scott Jacob** and **Judy Chrisman** for the basic design and concept, and to **Judy, Louisa Pieper, Carol Mull, Sue Kosky, Arlene Schmid, Jennifer Beyer,** and **Pat Pooley** for volunteering their time to mount the exhibit, and to **Pauline Walters** who made signs.

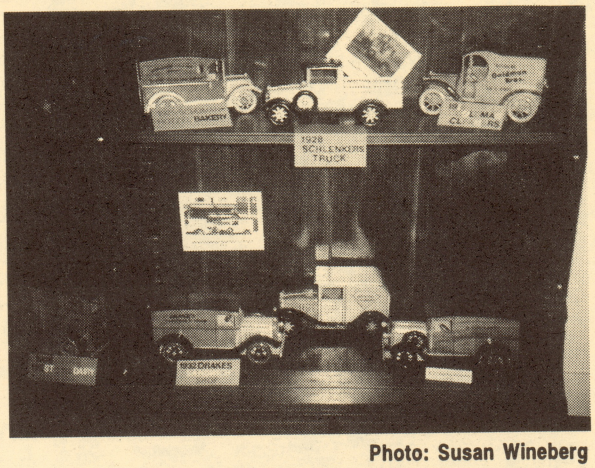

Photo: Susan Wineberg
Model trucks of delivery vehicles crafted by Ray Helber of Ann Arbor.

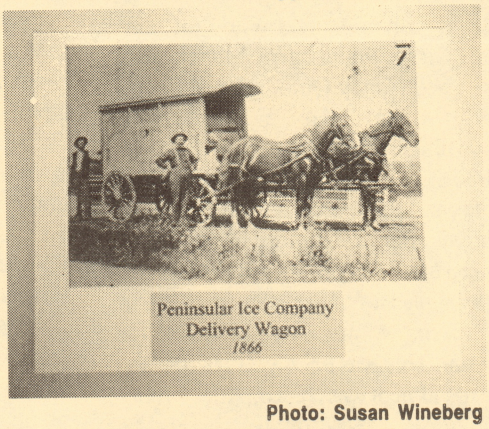

Photo: Susan Wineberg
Many people still remember when ice was delivered to their home.

In November we will be mounting our new exhibit **"Commercial Christmas."** We bemoan the commercialization of Christmas but it has a 100-year-old history! Come and see in **November** and **December.**

We will also be collaborating in November with the **Washtenaw County Historic District Commission** on an exhibit at the **Ann Arbor District Library** on the **Underground Railroad**

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How To Join

Send name, address and phone number with check payable to WCHS to: Treasurer, WCHS, P O Box 3336, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336. Annual dues are individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100. For information call (734) 662-9092 or e-mail us at WCHS MoMS@aol.com.

September Program

On **Sunday, September 16,** from 2-4 at the **Rentschler Farm in Saline**, we feature Wayne Clements, President of the Saline Area Historical Society, speaking on **"A Taste of Salt."** The salt springs are gone but have been replaced with several current attractions. Hear how it happened and tour the Rentschler Farm Museum. It is on Michigan Avenue and parking is on the service drive of the Sauk Trail Shopping Center just east of the farm.

Weddon Wows Washtenaw

Photo: Susan Wineberg
Willah Weddon speaking at the Annual Meeting at Webster Church.

On Wednesday, May 16, 2001, our **Annual Meeting** and **Potluck Dinner** was held at **Webster Church** in Webster Township. Our speaker, Ms. **Willah Weddon** of Stockbridge, is a former journalist with the *Ypsilanti Press, Jackson Citizen Patriot, Lansing State Journal* and *Detroit Free Press*. She is a native of Michigan, and lived at Willow Run for a time. She was a member of the Women's News Bureau of the Capitol Press Corps in Lansing and has published four books on the first families of Michigan including one about Michigan's first ladies and two about our governors. The winner of some 80 awards and the mother of five, Weddon entertained us with stories of life on the 'inside' of Michigan politics and the trials and tribulations of a female journalist in the 1950s.

Weddon took chances early in her career when she wrote up incidents involving the tearing up of newsroom photos of Marilyn Monroe by an irate reporter who disliked his mother. People loved this story, but the legislature didn't. Then she wrote a story about kitchen equipment going to a Senator's office, which upset both the Senator and the Press Corps. She did finally settle down and they all got along well.

She remembered when former Governor Romney left for Washington, D.C. He had pointed his finger at the Press Corps and stated "if things don't go right in Michigan, I'll be back." Sounding like a line from a Schwartzenegger movie, she used this as her lead. Weddon reminisced about Joyce Braithwaite, Gov. Milliken's assistant, and an interview with Mrs. Romney for the *Detroit Free Press*. For the latter she was advised to take a tape recorder because "they'll deny everything." This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship with the Romneys and she cherishes their letters to her to this day.

She also met with Gov. and Mrs. Swainson of Manchester, and Nancy Quirk wife of Soapy Williams. Her friendship with Helen Milliken, the governor's wife, led to her book on the governors' wives. She later revised this book as *First Ladies of Michigan* after doing more research and obtaining Mary Sleeper's diary (1916-1920). Sleeper signed a Women's Suffrage Bill in 1917, giving women the right to vote for president. This was three years before the 19th Amendment was passed. After writing these books, Weddon felt as if she personally knew all those involved and, in addition, was learning a lot about Michigan history! She saw these books about people as a way to interest others in the history of our state, and thus pursued information that resulted in books about the governors as well. Anecdotes from the book were presented about various first ladies, including Julia Mason, wife of Stevens T. Mason the first governor of the state; Almira Ransom of Kalamazoo; Mary Bingham of South Lyon; Lucretia Felch, wife of Ann Arborite Alpheus Felch (and first President of our Society!); Sarah Blair of Jackson; Elizabeth Winans of Howell; Josephine Comstock of Alpena; Lenore Romney; and Helen Milliken. Her book even discusses Michelle Engler, who Weddon notes is smart, nice and very friendly.

Weddon concluded her talk and then passed around photos of people she has encountered throughout her career. Her wit and enthusiasm were contagious and she had many members of the WCHS buying her books after the presentation and asking her many questions.

Weddon's books can be ordered directly from her. They are $12.95 each with a set of three costing $39.95. Shipping is $2.00 for the first book and $.50 after that. Send orders to Weddon Press, 4891 Dexter Trail, Stockbridge, MI 49285-9737.

Many Exhibits Planned

Continued from page 1

in Washtenaw County. We will have two cases at the library with our artifacts and clothing from the Plymouth Museum. On **Tuesday, November 6th**, there will be an opening reception for the exhibit at the library from 7-8:30 PM. **Carol Mull** will also be speaking on the Underground Railroad on **Sunday, November 4th** (see our Program Listings for details).

As if this weren't enough, we will be collaborating with the **Historic District Commission of the City of Ann Arbor to** mount an exhibit at **Larcom City Hall** to celebrate the 150th anniversary (**Sesquicentennial** to some of you) of **Ann Arbor becoming a city in 1851**. **Louisa Pieper** and **Judy Chrisman** are coordinating this event for us.

There is still more! We will also have exhibits in many cases at **UM Hospital** in cooperation with the **Gifts of Art Program**. This exhibit will be up **from September 10-October 25,** in the **Taubman Building, South Lobby. Scott Jacob** and **Judy Chrisman** are again giving up their time (which is precious since they both have jobs!) to do this exhibit as well. Our hats are off to the Collections and Exhibit Committees for a fall season stuffed with things for us to see!

BY LOUISA PIEPER

The 2001 June Trip

On a gray, drizzly day in June, a parade of four cars carrying 13 hardy souls went off to tour **Cranbrook Educational Community.** Did we ever get lucky! We had arranged to tour Cranbrook House and garden, have lunch on our own at the Science Museum, and then meet another guide to see sculpture near the Art Museum, Saarinen House and return to tour the Art Museum. What we got was THE most charming, informed, and dedicated docent (Bob Schuler), who spent the WHOLE day with us and took us everywhere! What a treat!

Cranbrook House, designed by **Albert Kahn** for the Booth family, the wealthy and artistically sensitive owners of the *Detroit News*, is very grand and yet manages to feel homey. The gardens, like ours though MUCH larger and filled with wonderful vistas and sculpture, are also maintained by dedicated volunteers. From there we wandered over to the Greek Theater past the "mountain" with its pines and trick antique spitting fountain. We drove past the **Brookside School** where they have built a gorgeous addition that blends beautifully with the older building, to **Kingswood School** where we saw **Eliel Saarinen's** breathtakingly beautiful dining room, lobby and lecture hall.

Then it was off to the **Science Museum cafe** - not gourmet but serviceable - in yet another great Saarinen building. That gave us a nice chance to get to know our guide Bob better and we even survived a sudden downpour afterwards. Bob then took us to the Infirmary parking lot in the heart of the oldest part of the campus, where we walked all through the lovely courtyards of the (formerly all male) **Cranbrook Academy.** Bob talked his way in to show us the gorgeous huge dining hall which was closed. An early Saarinen design with lots of **Finnish** motifs, it still has many original chairs and tables despite all those years of student abuse. Walking on, we visited the brand new, ultra modern natatorium which features a star-filled dome above the pool and a huge window looking out over the woods.

Then it was back to see the crown jewel - **Eliel Saarinen's own house** on Academy Way, which has been lovingly restored. The octagonal dining room with its rediscovered red niches and gilded dome over the octagonal table were worth the trip all by themselves. Before returning us to the Art Museum, Bob showed us Saarinen's Art Academy courtyard with its wonderful brick and slate details. Throughout the day, he shared with us his tremendous store of knowledge about the Booths, the Saarinens, sculptor Carl Milles and the whole development of what is today one of the most beautiful campuses in the world. Back at the Art Museum, with its two huge glorious Milles fountains and many other sculptures inside and out, we parted with Bob to enjoy the museum's small but excellent collection on our own, before leaving for home. It was a long but very stimulating day!

Now a few words about future June Trips from your program chair. As in past years, we did not have enough people to fill a bus and went in our own vehicles. The cost for admissions alone was $22 per person - quite reasonable. When you figure in the cost of a bus, however, ($15/person IF we fill a 47 person bus) and add in at least $10 for a box lunch, it easily costs $50. If you like the idea of this kind of excursion for between $50 and $60, **PLEASE** let us know. Send me your suggestions via mail or e-mail at the Society's addresses. **Unless I hear from enough people by January, there will be no June trip next year.**

Annual Meeting Draws A Crowd

The Annual Meeting and Election of Officers was held at the beautiful Webster United Church of Christ in Webster Township. **Webster Church,** named after the statesman **Daniel Webster**, is the oldest continually used church in Washtenaw County, and is a registered Michigan Historic Site. The church dates from 1834 and has an Italianate parsonage from 1876. The building is situated on a small knoll surrounded by over 150 acres of land, part of a farm that was bequeathed to the church in 1967 by William R. Scadin. Thanks to the sharp eyes of Rudy Gerdenich (age 5), we noticed the original beams in the ceiling of our basement meeting room!

After our usual fantastically delicious potluck dinner, we heard reports from various officers and elected our slate. Re-elected to positions were **Pauline Walters, President; Virginia Hills, Vice President; Patricia Creal, Treasurer;** and **Judith Chrisman, Recording Secretary.** Newly elected was **Carol Birch** as **Corresponding Secretary. Rosemarion Blake, Patricia Thompson, Ralph Beebe** and **Pam Newhouse** were elected to three-year terms. **Scott Jacob** will complete the term of **Nancy Bryk** who resigned due to work responsibilities.

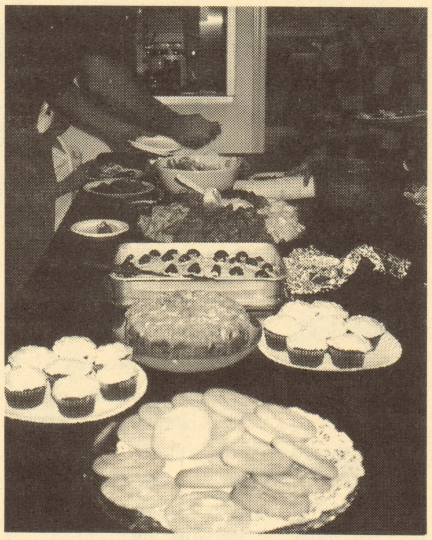

Photo: Susan Wineberg
Yummy food is always on hand at our Annual Meetings.

Lanterns And More Appear Over The Summer

Thanks to the work of **Teri Arthur Jefferson**, owner of Jefferson Art Lighting Company of Ann Arbor and designer of historic light fixtures; **Joe Majorana,** master electrician and owner of Electri-Serv Corp, of Northville; and **Bob Horwood,** tinsmith and owner of Horwood Country House of Plymouth, we have new light fixtures on both the front and the back of the house. Teri paid for and installed the lights at his expense and we gratefully thank him for his contribution. His firm, located at 1342 N. Main St. in Ann Arbor, is currently completing fixtures for the 1889 Atlanta Capitol building (four years of work!), the Michigan Theater, and hurricane resistant lights for the U.S. Virgin Islands. They have worked on many important projects, both in Ann Arbor and throughout the US. Some include Orchestra Hall, the DIA and the Music Hall in Detroit; East Quad, Mosher-Jordan and Stockwell Halls, and the Law School at the University of Michigan; the Michigan State Capitol, and buildings in Alabama, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, and North Carolina. You can check it out for yourself by visiting his website at **www.jeffersonartlighting.com.**

Joe Majorana also drywalled a former closet in the rear second floor loft space which we will be setting up as a small library and added more lighting for those back rooms.

New signs were also installed as a donation by **W.A.P. John** of **Grafaktri**, a graphics design firm at 1200 N. Main, which has done much work for Artrain in the past. **Pat Thompson,** and her new helper **Susan Kosky,** have been busy making our **garden** gorgeous and a beautiful sight to behold on Main Street for all those commuters. We look so good, in fact, that the **Old West Side Garden Club** was given a tour on Wednesday August 15. They are now building a stone retention wall using rocks from Sue's Saline farm (which specializes in antique apple varieties). A small vegetable garden was planted as well. Two new roses, an Ipsilanti and a Rugosa Belle P, were added this year. Pat's hard work is paying off as our museum sparkles like a jewel at Beakes and Main.

The **Sump Pump problem** that won't go away is now being tackled by **Tilton and Associates, Inc.** who have suggested a dry well (among other things) as an experimental way to try to deal with our sump water. Since we can't afford the $15,000 needed to hook up to the storm sewer, we are trying all other possible methods before we bite that awful bullet. But we need to do something immediately, since this continues to be a hazard to the public and is irritating our otherwise very pleasant neighbors.

We are looking swell and we have all these folks to thank for it!

New Volunteer A Great Help

Jennifer Beyer helped while the **Delivery Days** exhibit was being mounted and with many computer things that needed doing. She scanned many of the photos given by **David Oakley** (our **Kellogg** connection) and photos of the **Ruthruff** family as well. She also scanned a little booklet from the Cornwell Coal Company to create a cute item for patrons to take with them. In addition, she set up our business cards and embedded our logo onto our stationary. Pauline is as pleased as punch.

WCHS Board News

Warzynski and Newhouse Resign from Board - New Board Members Join Us

Long time board member **Esther Warzynski** has resigned for health reasons. When I spoke with her, Esther said she'd been on the board so long she couldn't remember when she first joined. She does remember the "old days" when we met at Rackham, the Court House, and Ann Arbor Federal Savings. Safe to say, she has been a driving force in WCHS for over 25 years. Esther served as program chair with her husband Ray for many years and remembers June trips to Canada and Toledo to visit 1812 battle sites. She also chaired the 125th anniversary banquet of the WCHS held at the Campus Inn in 1982. She also helped organize those famous Christmas meetings at the Clements Library. Past President **Pat Austin** remembered that Esther fought to have the grave of **Elisha Rumsey** (one of the founders of Ann Arbor) marked with a stone and plaque at Forest Hill Cemetery, and got the mayor's office to officially dedicate this memorial. "She was a diligent worker and never missed a meeting" Pat remembers. Together with Alice Ziegler and Elizabeth Dusseau, she kept the society together through thick and thin. Most recently, Esther handled our Knapp's points. She still stays active as a docent for Cobblestone Farm and for House by the Side of the Road. We will miss her very much.

Pam Newhouse has resigned because her DAR activities and Civil War research are demanding more and more of her time. Pam joined the Board in 1995 and has been a great help in being our PR person and in designing our brochure, among other things. We wish her the best and will miss her too!

At the August Board meeting, **Richard Galant,** Dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences at Washtenaw Community College, was appointed to replace Pam on the Board. We were directed to Richard through the Board Builders at the **NEW** Center. Also appointed to the Board as a Director-at-Large was **Susan Kosky**, a retired nurse and graduate of the preservation program at EMU. Sue is active with the US-12 Heritage Route Study Committee and is an avid gardener. **Welcome to our newest board members!** New blood is good!

We are **still looking for more people** to work with us in various capacities. We need someone to be our **Public Relations person**, letting the world know about our wonderful exhibits and programs. And we will need a **new program chair** for next year, as this is Louisa Pieper's last year. Please contact Pauline Walters if you are interested, 734-662-9092.

Program Schedule 2001-2001

Our intrepid Program Chair, **Louisa Pieper**, has again come up with a fantastic schedule for the coming year. Our aim is to 'get out into the county' and we hope you will enjoy it. All programs are on the third Sunday of the month, from 2-4, and are free and open to the public. Light refreshments are often served. Members receive a post card each month with more details and maps of how to reach the meetings.

Sunday • September 16th 2 PM

Wayne Clements, President of the **Saline Area Historical Society**, will give us a brief history of Saline in his talk entitled "**A Taste of Salt**." Former mayor **Rick Kuss,** previous owner of the farm museum **Warren Rentschler**, and tour guide **Agnes Dikeman,** will join him. The meeting will be held at the Society's historic **Rentschler Farm,** a collection of farm buildings interpreted as 1900-1950 to show changes between farming with horses and farming with tractors. The house is interpreted as 1930.

Sunday • October 21st 2 PM

Warren Hale of the **Hack House** in **Milan** will discuss the history of this 1883 house now under extensive renovation and the history of Milan as well.

Sunday • November 4th 2 PM

Carol Mull will speak on **"Freedom Bound: The Underground Railroad in Washtenaw County."** This is being co-sponsored with the **Washtenaw County Historic District Commission** and will be held at **Greenhills School** Auditorium.

Tuesday • November 6th 7-8:30 PM

Opening Reception for an **exhibit on the Underground Railroad** at the **Ann Arbor District Library, Main Branch,** co-sponsored with the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission. On **Thursday, November 8th,** WCHS Board Member **Karen Simpson** will be demonstrating quilting at the library from 7-8:30 PM.

Sunday • November 18th 2 PM

Cynthia Furlong Reynolds will discuss "**A History of Chelsea from Residents' Memories.**" It will be held at the Chelsea Retirement Community.

Sunday • February 17 2 PM

In honor of **Black History Month**, we will have **Jim Mays** speaking on "**The Story of the Buffalo Soldiers.** He will discuss the history of this group and the organization that exists today to perpetuate the memory of this valiant group of long forgotten soldiers.

Sunday • March 24th 2 PM

(note this is NOT the third Sunday)

Tammy Szatkowski will give us a tour of the **UM Dental [Gordon H. Sindecuse] Museum**, a fascinating and overlooked museum in the heart of the U-M Campus. See collections of old toothpaste tins, tooth brushes, false teeth and dentists' offices, much from the collection of **Dr. Ron** and **Maggie Berris.**

Sunday • April 21st 2 PM

Rachel Szymanski will speak on **Katherine Dexter McCormick.** Rachel won a gold award for her project on the granddaughter of Samuel Dexter, founder of the village. She is an 11th grade student at Dexter High School and a Girl Scout. Katherine McCormick was active in the women's suffrage movement and an early supporter of the birth control movement led by Margaret Sanger.

Wednesday • May 15th 6 PM

Annual Meeting and **Potluck** will be held in **Ypsilanti** at the **Ladies Literary Club.**

News From Collections Chair

Our **Collections Chair Judy Chrisman** has been busy over the summer, setting up the **Delivery Days** exhibit, working at our storage facility, and accepting new items. This month the Board voted to accept three 19th century chairs from **Shirley Smith**; six 19th century pictures from **Ted Aprill**; items from the interurban line rescued by **Ronald DeCicco** during the re-paving of Packard Street this summer; and assorted military items from **Ruth Husung,** including a 1919 medal for "Peace with Victory" and American Legion pins. Thank you one and all!

Fund Raising Efforts Continue

Watch for a little **sponge in your mail** that will encourage you to "Soak Up Some History" and also (we hope) to **donate to our Museum Fund.** You can also support the Society in general by **sponsoring an issue of the *Impressions* for $300.** Many local businesses have helped us in this effort in past years and we hope this will continue.

We also made a tidy **$800** by parking cars during the **Art Fair.** Thank you again to **Pete Rocco** who coordinated it, **Pauline Walters** who lined up volunteers, and all those hardy souls who braved the heat to park those cars. That list includes **Greg** and **Ann DeFreytas, Julie Goodridge, Patty Creal, Tom Freeman, Marjorie Cripps, Rosemarion Blake, Jay Snyder, Elsie Dyke, Pat Thompson** and **Jill Mhyre. TCF Bank** let us use their lot, something they do every other year.

Donation Helps Us Stay Open Longer

A generous donation from **Peter** and **Rita Heydon of the Mosaic Foundation** was sent to help us "regulate our opening hours." We are putting it to good use and have now set up regular hours for our exhibits. A big thank you to them and all our friends who help make us better.

Around The Town

Things are heating up in Ann Arbor as schools and universities re-open and present us with a myriad of things to do.

The **Old West Side Association's Annual Home Tour** will be **Sunday, September 23rd** from noon-5. Advance tickets are $7.00 ($6.00 for seniors) and tickets will be available at Jefferson Market, Washtenaw Dairy, Downtown Home and Garden and Peaceable Kingdom. By the way, the OWSA is now on the web! They have a great website at **www.oldwestside.org.** Check it out! For more information on them you can also call **President Christine Brummer** at **734-996-2564.**

The Kempf House has announced its **fall Noon Lecture Series**. The eight lectures are held on **Wednesdays from noon-1:00 PM** and admission is $2.00 ($1.00 for members). You may bring your lunch, but you must eat it in the dining room. They kick off their series on **September 19th** with **Mary Palmer,** speaking on ***"The William and Mary Palmer House"*** (designed by Frank Lloyd Wright). On **September 26th, Louisa Pieper** will speak on ***"Ann Arbor Becomes a City,"*** and on **October 3rd, Donna Lehman** will give a ***"Behind the Scenes Peek at the Gerald Ford Library."*** **Charlotte Sallade** will speak on **October 10th** on ***"Life in the Wilson-Wahr House,"*** Ann Arbor's famous Greek Revival home from the 1840s, and on **October 17th Walter Metzger** will talk on ***"German American Life in Ann Arbor."*** On **October 24th, Thomas E. Moore** will lecture on ***"UM's First Museum and Ornithologist J.B. Steere's 1870 Worldwide Expedition"*** and on **October 31st, Melinda Moore Kerr** will talk on ***"Ann Arbor Firefighting Then and Now."*** They conclude with **Sally Kennedy** speaking on ***"The Earhart and Kennedy Homes"*** on **November 7th. Call 734-994-4898.**

Cobblestone Farm also has several events planned for the fall. Their next big event is **Fall Harvest** on **Sunday, September 16th, from 1-5 PM.** The fee is $2/person and $8/family with children under 3 free. They will be smoking meat in the smoke house, cooking on the wood stove, and washing clothes in the iron cauldron over an open fire (sound like fun?), dipping candles, putting up the garden produce, and stuffing their mattresses for the winter.

They've been busy all summer, putting up **230 feet of rail fence,** getting the front **fountain working again**, and feeding all the animals. They have also completed the **Washroom Renovation** along the west porch. Future events will be a **Family Dance Series** on Sundays from 2-4:30 (**11/18; 12/16; 1/20; 2/17; and 3/17**), a **Wood Stove Cooking Workshop** on **Saturday, December 8th, Country Christmas** on **Sunday December 2nd,** and an old fashioned **Winter Evening** on **Friday, February 8th.** Call **734-994-2928** for more details.

Tours of Ann Arbor and the UM Campus have been announced by **Walkabout Excursions.** Our own **Louisa Pieper** is one of their guides. They are all held on **Sundays** and the first tour is a **Downtown Walkabout** on **October 14th** at 1 PM. On **September 23rd** they will host a **Central Campus Outdoor Art Walkabout** and on **October 28th** they will do a **Central Campus History and Architecture Walkabout.** Two tours will be held in connection with the **Albert Kahn Exhibit** at the UM Museum of Art on **September 16th** and **October 21st. Pre-Registration is required.** Call **734-623-4440** or pre-register on the web at **www.walkabout-excrusions.com** or e-mail them at **walkabout@mediaone.net.** Cost is **$16.00/**person.

The 1854 **Detroit Observatory** has announced its open house and lecture schedule for the fall. The lecture series begins on **Tuesday, September 18th** at **3 PM** with a lecture by **James Tobin** on ***"Air and Space: An Astronomer's Quest for Human Flight 1889-1903."*** It will cover the exciting debate on who really invented the airplane. At **7 PM** on **Tuesday, October 30th, Dr. Francis X. Blouin,** Director of the Bentley Historical Library, will speak on ***"History and Memory: Problems in the Pursuit of the Past."*** He will discuss how archives have been caught up in the political debate on reconstructing the past. All lectures are free and open to the public and are at the Observatory located at 1398 E. Ann St., at the corner of Ann and Observatory.

The observatory will also be holding **open houses** on **Wednesday, September 12** from 2-5 PM, **Thursday, September 27** from 11AM-2 PM, **Thursday, October 11** from 11-2 PM and **Wednesday, October 24** from 2-5 PM. These are docent-guided tours which take you back to the mid-19th century when this was a state-of-the-art astronomical observatory on the Michigan frontier and acted as timekeeper for the Great Lakes region. A donation of $5.00 is suggested. For more information call **734-763-2230** or visit their website at **www.DetroitObservatory.umich.edu.**

Attention All Teachers!

Two **Loan Boxes** and a **"What's It" Game** are available. WCHS offers a traveling exhibit of small artifacts, set up as a "What's It" Game, for schools and other groups. We also have two loan boxes, **HATS TO SPATS** and **LIFE BEFORE ELECTRICITY** which can be rented for a $15.00 fee and deposit. The loan boxes are 'hands on' artifacts and books which illustrate how life was lived before electricity (you had to grind your own coffee and went to bed at 5 PM in the winter when the sun went down) and what adults and children wore in the 19th century. **Sally Silvennoinen** demonstrates the "What's It" and handles the loan boxes. Give her a call at **734-971-5086.**

Around The County

The Potawatami Land Trust has formally changed its name to the **Washtenaw Land Trust (WLT). The WLT** Board voted on this name change in May. Executive Director **Barry Lonik** also announced they would be moving into offices in the NEW Center in Ann Arbor, hiring additional staff and doing more aggressive marketing of themselves.

They have been busy too! On March 30, the WLT permanently protected the 30-acre farm of **David Braun** in Section 5 of Ann Arbor Township, by the purchase of a conservation easement. This is the first easement purchase by a land trust in Michigan and was given a great boost by the Township Board's contribution of $15,000. This is a $60,000 project, of which $19,000 has been raised. If you wish to contribute, send $$ to WLT at P O Box 186, Dexter, MI 48130.

The WLT also helped the City of Ann Arbor purchase a five-acre parcel to be the "**Redbud Nature Area**" fronting on Mallett's Creek. WLT purchased the property and held it until the city received funding for the purchase.

The **Saline Area Historical Society** invites you and your family to attend the **3rd Annual Harvest Time** at the **Rentschler Farm, Saturday October 6, 2001**, 11-4. There will be live farm animals, demonstrations, story telling, crafts, food, tours and exhibits. The farm is at **1265 E. Michigan Ave (U.S. 12)**.

They have also announced their **Fall Lecture Series**. All lectures are on Wednesday nights at 7:30 at the Depot and are free with light refreshments.

September 19th will feature **Cathy Andrews** speaking on "**Putting the Pieces Together with our Society's Glue.**" On **October 17 Jim Schultz** from Education Outreach will talk on "**The Michigan Historical Center**." And on **November 14, Jim Cameron**, a Saline high school history teacher, will speak on "**Saline Valley Farms 1932-1953.**" On **Friday, December 7**, from 5-8 PM, at the Depot will be the **Christmas Open House** preceding the Saline Parade. And on **Friday, January 18, 2002,** will be the **14th Annual Antique Show**. For more information call **734-769-2219.**

Saline is also actively working towards establishing several historic districts, according to an article in the July 2 issue of the *Ann Arbor News*. A Study Committee has been formed to create a **North Ann Arbor Street Historic District**. Already close to completion is the **West Henry** and **South St. Louis Streets Historic District.** If passed by Council, homeowners can then take advantage of the **20% state tax credit** available to those within the district. And I am **happy to announce that the sunset provision on this tax credit has been removed from the enabling legislation,** allowing for many more such districts to be formed. Not only do districts protect the charm and historic character of our small towns (and big ones too for that matter), but they also stabilize areas and increase property values.

The Waterloo Farm Museum in Stockbridge has two main events left for the year. On **Sunday, October 14th,** they hold their **Pioneer Day** from noon-5PM. And on **Saturday** and **Sunday, December 1 and 2, from noon-5pm,** they hold their annual **Victorian Christmas** exhibits. For more information call **517-851-4084** or visit their website at **http://scs.k12.mi.us/~waterloo.**

The Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County will meet on **Sunday, September 23, 2001** at 1:30 in the auditorium of the Education Center McAuley Health Center, 5305 Elliot Drive. Use Parking lot "P" and look for their signs. **Stephen Charter**, Archivist at the Center for Archival Collections at Bowling Green University, will speak on **"German Research"** and on "**Researching your Immigrant Ancestors.**" All are welcome. For more information contact Marcia McCrary, **734-483-2799.**

A Genealogical Conference of the Old Northwest Territory will be held **Thursday to Saturday, October 18-20, 2001 at the Northfield Hilton Hotel in Troy, Michigan.** Entitled **"Inkwells to the Internet",** this conference will feature over 40 sessions in ethnic/locality, historical, methodology, and computers research. Dr. **John Phillip Colletta** will be the featured speaker at the Friday banquet. For further information visit their website at **www.rootsweb.com/~mimgc** or write 2001 Seminar, 24462 Broadview, Farmington Hills, MI 48336.

The **Dexter Historical Society** held its annual **Dexter Daze** on August 10 and 11, which included a special exhibit of the Kleinschmidt collection of hand made miniature farm equipment and historic buildings. The Society also had a booth concerning **Gordon Hall**, and is still desperately trying to raise the funds to buy the property from the University of Michigan. As of this date, the Study Committee was split on the recommendation for designation, with three in favor of the entire 67 acres and three voting for 20 acres with a recommendation that the remaining acreage be protected by zoning, a conservation easement, PDRs, etc. It will go to the **Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners** for a decision. If you wish to support their efforts, send donations to **DAHS—Save Gordon Hall**, 3443 Inverness St., Dexter, MI 48130. DAHS is a 501(c)(3) organization, so donations are **tax deductible**. You can reach them by calling **734-426-2519,** or e-mailing them at **dexmuseu@hvcn.org**.

Other study committees active in Washtenaw County are the **Milton Geer House** at 8605 West Ann Arbor Road in Superior Township and the **William** and **Jane McCormick Farmstead** at 9105 West Ann Arbor Road in Superior Township. The Geer Report is ready to be submitted to the Board of Commissioners and the McCormick Report is currently being finalized. If and when these are approved, a lovely stretch of **Ann Arbor-Plymouth Road** (which includes the Esek Pray house designated last year) will be preserved. Hats off to **Superior Township**!

The **Salem Area Historical Society** has been active over the summer as well. President **Don Riddering** talked to the *Ann Arbor News* (8/7/01) about their plans to renovate the **Jarvis School** at Curtis and North Territorial roads to an original look,

so it can be placed on the State Register of Historic Buildings. This means the 154-year-old building may get back its two-hole outhouse, belfry and woodshed. It already got a new floor, roof, windows and walls this summer. Plexiglas was installed in the ceiling to allow people to see the hand-hewn beams. The most unusual feature of this school is that it is of colorful cut fieldstones, laid in lines along one wall and randomly along another! It is unique in Washtenaw County. The school held its last class in the mid-1960s and has been boarded up since. Also on their agenda is a **barn raising** of an old barn dismantled and moved from Six Mile Rd and Chubb to this site. Riddering happily announced that it would be their new headquarters, where they will hold meetings, have exhibits and preserve their archives.

Photo: Susan Wineberg

The McCormick Farm at 9105 W. Ann Arbor Road, Superior Township, under study for designation as a historic structure by the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission.

The **Pittsfield Township Historical Society** has been busy with a growing membership. In their March newsletter they announced they had acquired the **Sutherland-Wilson Farm**, a **sesquicentennial farm** on over four acres with barn and several outbuildings. The farm was acquired from the current owners and residents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Wilson, who wish to have the farm used as a farm museum. Louis Johnson, Bob Lillie and John Etter brokered the agreement, and an acquisition plan was developed that was favorable to the township. The Wilsons will remain in half the house but the society is already looking for farm implements, furniture and other items. Call Betty LeClair at 734-971-2384 or Helen Richards at 734-971-2177. **Pittsfield Heritage Day Arts and Craft Show** will be held **Friday, September 14** from 6-8 PM and **Saturday, September 15** from 9-3. Call Mary Ellen Wall at **734-434-5530** for more information.

And our friends in **Ypsilanti** have really been in the news lately! According to the ***Ann Arbor News*** (7/22/01), Ypsilanti is now designated as a tourist stop in the **Automobile National Heritage Area.** This puts them in the good company of Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon, parts of the vast park system administered by the federal National Park Service. Ypsilanti's Automotive Heritage Collection, attached to Miller Motors at the eastern edge of Depot Town, has been named one of nine hubs on this auto heritage trail, which winds from Detroit to Dearborn, up to Flint and Pontiac and into Ypsilanti. Also included on this part of the trail are the **Yankee Air Museum, the Michigan Antique Fire Equipment Museum** and **Miller Motors.**

Another coup for Ypsilanti is that **Elijah McCoy** will finally be inducted into the **National Inventors Hall of Fame** in September for his ingenious oil cup invention for steam engines. It only took 129 years, but this African American Ypsilanti resident from 1850-1878 will now finally get his due. McCoy held 57 patents when he died. He was born in 1843 in Colchester, Ontario (Canada) after his parents came north on the Underground Railroad from Kentucky. McCoy graduated from Ypsilanti High School and was then sent to Edinburgh, Scotland to study railroad engineering as an apprentice. He returned to Ypsilanti after the Civil War and eventually got a job on the Michigan Central as a fireman and oilman. His oil cup, which lubricated moving parts of the train without having to stop, is supposedly the object of the expression "the real McCoy." Today, an original lubricating cup is on display at the **Ypsilanti Historical Museum** and this summer Greenfield Village hosted a one-man drama called "Elijah: The Real McCoy."

On August 19th, **the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation** conducted its 24th Annual **Historic Home Tour,** showcasing six prize-winning restorations in town. The City of Ypsilanti, the Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce collaborated to install **banners and signs** identifying the **City of Ypsilanti Historic District.** And news about the **Towner House** is gratifying. It is now fully restored, painted and planted and proudly taking its place in the Huron Street parade of architectural styles. The Foundation's newsletter, ***Heritage News,*** also reports that more false facades are disappearing from the commercial buildings on Michigan Avenue, that EMU will be the repository of artifacts from the **Titanic**, and that a new state historic marker was installed at the Methodist Church on Washington at Washtenaw.

On **Wednesday, September 26** at 7:30 PM at the **First United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti**, EMU historic preservation graduate Chris Norman will speak on an **archaeological dig** that took place behind his 1859 house on North Huron Street. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at **www.yhf.org.**

Beyond Washtenaw

The City of Detroit threw quite a party this summer to celebrate its **300th birthday**, and the party continues!

On **Friday-Sunday, October 5-7,** the **Historical Society of Michigan** will hold its **127th Annual Meeting and Michigan Historic Conference**, with meetings both in Dearborn at the Holiday Inn-Fairlane, and in Detroit at the Dr. Charles Wright Museum of African American History. The theme of the conference will be Detroit's history. Many scholars will contribute including the **Hon. Damon J. Keith**, of the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals and **Dr. Philip P. Mason,** Professor of History at Wayne State University, past president of the Historical Society of Michigan, and founding Director of the Walter P. Reuther Library. Panels will be discussing family memories, the immigrant experience, labor in Detroit, the Underground Railroad, the Role of Religion and much more. Call **313-336-3340** to sign up.

The **Michigan Museums Association** will hold its **Annual Conference Wednesday-Friday, September 12-14** at the McGregor Conference Center, Wayne State University. The theme is "Celebrating Michigan Communities" and highlights the role both small and large museums play in preserving community heritage. The keynote speaker is **Kimberly D. Williamson,** Executive Director of the **DDA in New Orleans**. There will also be tours of downtown Detroit and Belle Isle. Call **313-873-3000** for information.

Two Detroit neighborhoods will conduct tours to celebrate Detroit's 300th. The **University District Community Association** will present its **Home and Garden Tour** from 11-5 on **Sunday, September 16th**. Seven homes and two gardens will be open. It will appeal to those interested in early 1900s architecture. Tickets are $12.50. Call **313-341-8322.**

The Woodbridge Home and Garden Tour will be held **Saturday, September 22nd** from 10-4. The tour begins at the Frederick Douglass Library on Grand River. Tickets are $12. For more information visit their website at **www.woodbridgedetroit.com.**

Preservation Wayne is conducting **tours every Saturday**, and you can choose from five topics. The Detroit Heritage Tour Series has been expanded for the 300th birthday to include the **Eastern Market, the New Center Area, downtown, midtown, and the auto heritage area around the Model T plant on Piquette St.** Learn more about this group, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this spring, by calling **313-577-3559** or visiting their website at **www.preservationnwayne.org.**

The **Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board** and **Historic District Commission** announced in its Spring newsletter that **Lower Woodward Avenue** is being studied for **designation as a historic district**. Much of Detroit's cultural, social, labor and civil rights history was made against the backdrop of Woodward Avenue. The buildings, which date from 1886-1941, create a strong visual image for downtown Detroit, and several loft conversions are already underway. You can reach them at **313-224-3487.**

The **Detroit Historical Society and Museums** have many **Sunday Strolls** planned. On **September 16th,** they will tour **Sandwich Towne** (Windsor), and on **September 30th** there will be a **Civil War Tour of Elmwood Cemetery**. **St. Mary's College of Ave Maria University** in **Orchard Lake** will be featured on **October 14th.** All tours are at 2 PM and last 2-3 hours, rain or shine. Tickets may be reserved by calling **313-833-1405.**

Also offered are tours in conjunction with the **Building Detroit Exhibit** at the **DIA**. On **Thursday, November 8th,** at 5 PM there will be a tour of the **New Midfield Terminal** at **Metro Airport.** Fee is $25 for members, $30 for non-members.

Also on tap are **special lunches** at **Historic Fort Wayne** on **Saturday, September 22nd,** 11 AM; the **Parade Company**, which makes the **floats for the Thanksgiving Parade** on **Saturday, October 20th** at 10 AM; and **The Scarab Club** on **Saturday, December 8th** at 10 AM. All lunches are $35 for members, $40 for non-members.

The Society also hosts a **Dinner Series.** On **Thursday, September 27**, dinner will be served at the historic **Grosse Pointe Hunt Club** at 6 PM. On **Friday, October 12th** at 6 PM will be a dinner at The **Players,** a gentlemen's theatre club built in 1926 in a 16th century **English Renaissance style**. On **Thursday, November 15th,** dinner will be hosted at the **Standard Federal Financial Center** to highlight their contemporary art collection. Dinners cost $64 for members $74 for non-members.

Beyond lunch and dinner, the Society also sponsors **Church Tours**, which are extremely popular. Five different churches will be showcased on **October 1st, November 5th** and **December 3rd.** These sell out fast, so make reservations soon. Call **313-733-1405**. The **Black Historic Sites Committee** will also customize a tour of black historic sites for groups. Call them at **313-833-9721.**

The **Heritage Hill Weekend Tour of Homes** in **Grand Rapids** will be held this year on **October 6th** and **7th.** For over 30 years this tour has delighted folks with its diverse architecture in one of the largest urban historic districts recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. This year there will be twelve buildings to tour. Spend the weekend and stay in a bed and breakfast! Call **616-459-8950** or visit their website at **www.heritagehill.gen.mi.us.**

First Free Church Of Michigan In Superior Township

Karl Williams is currently completing a history of the **First Free Church of Michigan**, established in Superior Township in 1849. A church was built in 1855 at the southwest corner of **Ford** and **Gotfredson Roads** and was demolished in 1934. He is looking for a photograph of the church. Anyone out there got one? If so, contact Karl at **734-453-8954** or E-mail him at **Kaykarl@aol.com.**

We Are Winners!

The WCHS was honored for its work in moving and restoring the Museum on Main Street at the **Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony** given by the **Michigan Historic Preservation Network** on April 27th. Former Board Member **Caroline Mohai** wrote the nomination that got us this coveted award, presented in a gala ceremony held at the Guardian Building in Detroit. **Past President Susan Wineberg** accepted the award on behalf of the Society. A wonderful slide show highlighted each award winner and we looked very impressive, I must say. We have come a long way, and truly deserved their **2001 Community Award.**

Photo: Lars Bjorn
Past President Susan Wineberg accepts award in Detroit from the Michigan Historic Presrevation Network.

Website Being Created

Former Vice President and Program Chair **Ina Hanel** has volunteered to be webmaster and work to design a website for WCHS. It has been recommended that we work with the HVCN group who maintain free web sites for nonprofits. Ina has received a scholarship to attend their classes this fall (tuition is $85). Things will really take off when we have a website up and running.

Business Support

This month's issue of *Impressions* is co-sponsored by

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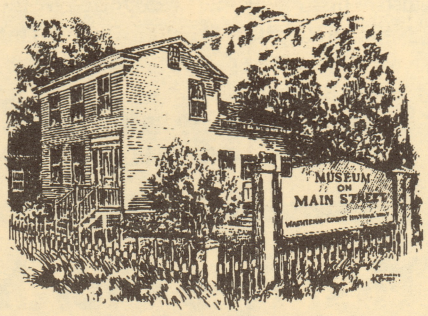

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